

From The Literary Digest for January 18, 1919

AND JESUS SAID

"If ye shall ask anything of the Father in my name, He will give it you."

For nineteen centuries this glorious promise has been a source of comfort and of strength to countless millions of the oppressed, the sick, the suffering, the troubled, and the grievously burdened. These burning words have been a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day to the heavily laden and the sore distressed and to those multitudes who have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of affliction or death. And now in this latter day—nay, at this very hour—millions of women and children in and near those lands, those hills and rivers made holy by the sacred memories of our Lord, are claiming this promise and are crying out to Him in an agony of spirit and body beseeching Him that He will save them from starvation, from death, and from horrors worse than death.

Four million Armenians, Syrians, and other war-sufferers in western Asia are practically without food, clothing, or shelter, the vast majority helpless women and children. More than a million and a half have been deported. Nearly a million have been brutally murdered and massacred. Four hundred thousand children are orphaned. It can be said that there are practically no more children left under the age of five, all having perished from exposure and disease. For every hundred births there are from two to three hundred deaths. The newly born children die almost immediately, their mothers having nothing to give them but tears. Deaths from dysentery, typhus, tuberculosis, and famine are increasing from day to day with appalling rapidity. The homeless—a pitiful stream of women and children—wander aimlessly through the streets of their wrecked villages. If you stop a child toward evening and ask him where he is going he will tell you, "I am searching for a place to sleep."

All winter long they have slept in nooks and corners, in alleys and by the roadsides, with no blankets, no covering whatever, their clothing the merest rags. The women clasp their wan-faced children to their breasts and on their faces is written the pitiful story of their utter despair.

The scenes in these lands of grief and suffering are beyond the power of imagination to conceive or of words to describe. Throughout the length and breadth of these countries there is no food save bread, the dry crusts of bread that they receive at the hands of charity. No meats, no soups, no vegetables, no sugar, less than a pound of bread daily, and even this poor morsel has often to be shared with others. "A poor old woman faint with hunger said to me to-day," writes one of the devoted workers, "'*Sahib*, the bread won't go down. I soak it in water, but it sticks in my throat.'"

"Wheresoever I go," a missionary reports, "I see men or women fallen on the street dead or dying, and little emaciated children stretching out their wasted hands 'for just one *shahie* for bread,' tears running down their cheeks, and still more awful are the little ones sitting propped against a wall, listless and torpid, indifferent even to food, waiting quietly for death."

"Just now," says another worker, "I have been interrupted in my writing. A Jewess has come to tell me of a woman who staggered to her door begging late last evening. She was allowed to spend the night in a corner of the house and this morning she was dead. 'Won't you please send some one to bury her,' implored my caller."

Such pleas are frequent now. There are more dead than buried in Armenia. Men and women once in good circumstances and self-respecting, now hungry, helpless, friendless, crawl away, like animals, out of sight, die unseen, and lie unburied.

There is no joy of victory in these distraught lands; but only the cries of an agonized people to whom peace has brought neither benediction nor blessing; neither rest nor respite; lands where the war has left an awful human wreckage in its wake; a great Kingdom of Grief filled with the cries of mothers and orphans, a distressed people prostrate with desolation, numbed with suffering, having no partnership in the great joy of a liberated world.

No sons, no fathers, no brothers are returning victorious to their homes in Armenia or Syria, for their villages and their cities have been razed and ruined and lie in dust and ashes, and the men by the thousands and hundreds of thousands have been pitilessly murdered or barbarously deported.

Deported? Yes, but what a euphemism for the most heartless and relentless cruelty. Deportation means the loss of home, business property, and every personal possession. It means being driven into desert places, forced to march at the point of the bayonet until strength is exhausted; it means being refused shelter, food, drink; it means being subjected to outrage and calculated cruelty.

Many such scenes of terrible and tragic suffering are in the very lands where Jesus walked with his disciples; where He had compassion on the needy multitudes, and fed them and healed them and comforted them. Many of these awful sights are even in the very shadow of the Mount of Olives, where Christ said: "Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Millions of "*the least of these my brethren*" are hungry and naked and sick and in terrible prisons without walls. In them and through them the King of Pity and of Love is calling *to you* to minister to them just as you would do if you saw Him lying at your feet.

You, to whom the Christmas just past has meant a time of reunion, a time of feasting and happiness; you, whose homes are warm and whose children are well fed, think now of these your brothers and sisters who are perishing. The cries of these children *must* reach your ears. The prayers of these mothers *must* touch your hearts. These homeless and starving millions are dependent on charity—your charity—for Turkish charity provides for no one—it begins and ends at home.

It is America's God-given privilege to feed the hungry from her great bounty and from her unlimited stores. It is her blessed duty to lift the head of fallen Armenia and put the cup of cold water to her lips and the morsel of bread in her hands, and so prove herself indeed the protector and liberator of the oppressed and subject races.

We have presented the needs of the Armenians twice before to our *Literary Digest* readers, and they have responded largely, liberally, most generously. But now the period of rehabilitation in the Near East is at hand. Vastly larger sums will be required to restore the refugees to their homes than were required merely to sustain life in their desert exile. The American Committee for Relief in the Near East, under the able leadership of Cleveland H. Dodge, is appealing for a minimum of thirty million dollars "with which," say the committee, "we can, humanly speaking, save every life."

We feel this cause to be so worthy, this need to be so desperately urgent, that even though we made a liberal contribution less than a year ago, we are now subscribing five thousand dollars to this new drive. We are doing this after having convinced ourselves by a careful investigation extending over a number of days that these funds will be wisely administered, that this work is in most capable hands, and that every dollar given will go for relief without the deduction of one cent for organization expenses. Send your own contribution quickly, and so bring new life and a new hope to some weary, broken body in the Near East.

Now is our opportunity to show these lands made luminous by the footprints of Christ and the Apostles what our Christianity of the West means to-day. Now is the time when these places of sacred history should receive a new sanctification by the service of God's children in the twentieth century. With a Christlike healing of the sick and feeding the hungry, we will make a royal highway for our Lord into the grateful hearts of these people, along which the King of Glory may come with his message of love and light.

The above appeal is printed in The New York Sun, with the confident hope that the sympathetic hearts of its hundreds of thousands of readers will respond with thousands of checks made payable to Mr. Dodge

**Send your check at once to Cleveland H. Dodge, Treasurer,
Room 190, No. 1 Madison Avenue, New York City**